Optional Practical Training
(OPT)

International Student & Scholar Services
Montclair State University
Outline

- What is OPT?
- Types of OPT
- Eligibility requirements
- Types of Employment allowed
- When can you apply for OPT?
- Application Process
- What happens next?
- Your responsibilities while on OPT
- Travel while on OPT
What is OPT?

- Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major of study
- May be authorized up to 12 months of OPT per educational level
  - If a student begins a new academic program at a higher level, the student is eligible for another 12 months of OPT
Types of OPT

- Pre-completion OPT (before completion of studies)
- Post-completion OPT (after completion of studies)
Eligibility Requirements

Pre Completion OPT

- Limited to part-time only while school is in session
- Student still has coursework to complete
- For most students, Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a better option

Post Completion OPT

- Be enrolled for at least one full academic year
- Be in valid F-1 status
- Be in good academic standing
- Seek employment in your major of study

Note:

You do not need to have a job offer to apply for OPT

For more information, contact International Student & Scholar Services by email, intserv@montclair.edu to schedule an appointment.
Types of Employment allowed

OPT employment must be a minimum of 20 hours per week in a job that is related to your degree program.

- Paid employment
- Multiple employers
- Work for hire (commonly referred to as 1099 employment)
- Self employed business owner
- Employment through an agency
- Unpaid/volunteer work or unpaid interns (this must not violate any labor laws)
When can you apply for OPT?

Application timeline

- The earliest you can apply for OPT is 90 days before the program completion date (last day of classes)
- OPT start date must be within your 60 day grace period after the program completion date

Example:

If you complete studies on December 21, 2017:

- You can choose OPT start date as early as December 22, 2017
- You can choose OPT start date as late as February 19, 2018
- End date will be one year from your start date (i.e. a January 1st start date will have a December 31 end date)
Application Process

- Request an OPT I-20
  - At least 10 business days processing time

- Prepare and mail your application materials to USCIS
  - While your OPT I-20 is being processed gather and organize all the required documents
  - After USCIS receives your application, allow approximately 90 days for processing. This process may take longer

- Receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

**Note:**

Once USCIS receives the OPT application, it is not possible to change the requested start and end dates
Request OPT I-20

- Complete the online [OPT I-20 Request Form](#)
- Upload the completed OPT Advisor Recommendation Form to the online application
- Upload the completed [I-765 Form](#) to the online application
OPT I-20 Request Form

**Personal Information**

- **Last Name**: 
- **First Name**: 
- **Campus ID (CID)**: 
- **SEVIS ID**: 
- **Monclair Email Address**: 
- **Alternate Email Address**: 
- **Phone Number**: 
  - (Format: 123-456-7890) 
- **Current Address**: 
  - **Street Address**: 
  - **City**: 
  - **State / Province / Region**: 
  - **Postal / Zip Code**: 
  - **Country**: 

**Degree Level**

- Bachelor’s
- Master’s
- Doctorate
- Certificate
- Dual Degree

**Documents Required**

- OPT Advisor Recommendation Form
- I-20 Form

**Documents to Upload**

- Copy of OPT Recommendation
- Copy of the completed Form I-797

**Options**

- I will pick up my I-20 Form
- Send by regular mail to my address listed above
- Express Shipping (FedEx, UPS, DHL)

**Comments**

- By submitting the form, I confirm (check all): 
  - I understand OPT restricts me to employment in my field of study.
  - I have attended an OPT workshop.
  - I take personal responsibility to understand and adhere to the OPT regulations and restrictions.

**Submit this form**: 

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Office of International Education & Global Engagement
International Student & Scholar Services
Email: intserv@montclair.edu

International Student & Scholar Services
973-655-6862
intserv@montclair.edu

OPT I-20 Request Form

Documents required with the application (Make sure you have both documents completed and ready to upload in the application below before starting the online application):

- OPT Advisor Recommendation Form
- I-20 Form: Type the form, print, sign in blue before uploading.
OPT Advisor Recommendation Form

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Recommendation Form

This form is required only if you are applying for post-completion OPT

To Be Completed by Student

Family Name: ___________________________ Given Name: ___________________________
Campus ID: ___________________________ SEVIS ID: ___________________________

To Be Completed by Academic Advisor or Authorized Department Personnel

The above-named student is applying for permission to engage in employment for Optional Practical Training (OPT) as provided in the immigration regulations for F-1 students. OPT is employment in a job related to the student’s field of study and is intended to enhance and supplement the formal, classroom education.

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) must have a statement from the student’s academic advisor indicating the date the student is expected to complete all degree requirements or the expected date of completion.

Please check the following two statements for accuracy:

☐ The student is in good academic standing and is making normal progress toward degree completion

☐ The student is expected to complete his/her degree requirements (e.g. last course, thesis/dissertation) by _______________.

Advisor Name: ___________________________ Title: ___________________________
Department: ___________________________ School: ___________________________
Email: ___________________________ Extension: ___________________________
Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
I-765 Form

- Complete the form by typing answers into the PDF form
- Do not handwrite the information on the form
- Answer all questions fully and accurately. State that an item is not applicable with “N/A”. If the answer is none, write “None”
- Once complete, print the form single sided, sign and date in blue ink

# 10. Write your I-94 number
https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home

# 15. Student

# 16. Post completion OPT (c) (3) (B)
# I-765 Form

**Certification:**
Include date of Signature and telephone number
Print, sign in **Blue ink**

**Do not complete this section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17. (c)(10) Eligibility Category</th>
<th><strong>If you entered the eligibility category (c)(10) in Question 16 above, list your degree, employer's name as listed on E-Verify, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
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| 18. (c)(26) Eligibility Category | **If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of your I-134 or other principal sponsor's most recent Form I-947 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.** |

| 19. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category | **If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of your I-530 Notice of Approval for Form I-140.** |

| 20. Have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime? | **☐ Yes ☐ No** |

**NOTE:** If you answered "Yes" to Item Numbers 10.b., refer to Item Number 5., 10.c. or 10.d. on the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing exact dispositions.
Prepare documents for mailing

- USCIS fee of $410. Check made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Two color pictures passport style (with name and SEVIS ID written lightly in pencil on back of each photo)
- Form G-1145. To confirm receipt and obtain case number in advance of paper notification(Optional but recommended)
- Form I-765. Typed and signed in blue ink
- Photocopy of OPT I-20 that was issued by International Student & Scholar Services within the last 30 days (page 1-3). Sign the I-20 in blue
- Photocopies of all previous I-20s issued by Montclair State and all other schools attended
- Photocopy of any previous EAD card if applicable
- Photocopy of passport biographical page
- Photocopy of paper form I-94 (both sides) or electronic I-94 record
- Photocopy of F-1 visa stamp or photocopy of change of status approval notice

No documents for dependents required
Guidelines for Passport Style Pictures

- The photos required to use for OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. Style passport photos. For full description visit the U.S. Department of State website.
- The photos must be taken within 30 days of filing your application.
- The photos must be 2” by 2” in color against a plain white or off-white background.
Mailing OPT Application

- Prior to mailing the application packet make copies of all the documents, including the check.
- Do not staple any documents

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<tr>
<th>USCIS Mailing Addresses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Express Mail (Fedex, UPS)</strong></td>
<td><strong>U.S. Postal Service Mail (choose priority mail option)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn: AOS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
<td>PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</td>
</tr>
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</table>
What happens next?

- You will receive Receipt I-797 in the mail approximately 2 weeks after mailing.
- If you submitted the form I-1145, then you should receive email/text earlier.
- Using the receipt number you can check the status of your application at the USCIS website.
- You cannot start working unless you have the actual EAD card in hand and until the approved start date listed on the card.
Your Responsibilities during OPT

1. Reporting Requirements
2. Employment Requirements
3. Traveling while on OPT
4. Applying for F-1 Visa while on OPT
Your Responsibilities during OPT

● Reporting Requirements
  ○ You must report any changes to your employment, address, and/or name within 10 days.
  ○ Complete the [OPT Student Report Form](#)

● Employment Requirements
  ○ You must work a minimum of **20 hours per week** in a position related to your field of study
  ○ You cannot exceed more than **90 days of unemployment** while on OPT.
Travel while on OPT

Traveling while on OPT

- Valid OPT I-20 which must be signed by an International Student Advisor
  - Complete the Travel Signature Request Form
- Valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- Valid passport. Passport must be valid six months in advance of your return date
- Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
- Employment Confirmation Letter from employer

Note

Traveling outside the U.S. while OPT is pending is not recommended
Travel while OPT is pending

Travel after program completion, but before EAD is received:

- There is a higher risk associated with travel and return while your OPT application is pending. If there are problems with your application, you may not be able to respond to USCIS in a timely manner, which could delay processing.
- If your OPT application is denied while outside the U.S., you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status.
Applying for F-1 visa while on OPT

If you are traveling abroad and your F-1 visa has expired, you must obtain a new F-1 visa in your home country before returning to the U.S. For the visa interview take the following documents:

- Valid passport (must be valid six months in advance of your return to U.S.)
- Valid OPT I-20 with travel signature from the advisor at International Student & Scholar Services
- EAD Card
- Job offer/confirmation of job in your field of study
- Evidence of sufficient funds